

Washington State Auditor's Office
Accountability Audit Report

Whatcom Transportation Authority
Whatcom County

Report Date
September 4, 2009

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September 28, 2009



WASHINGTON
BRIAN SONNTAG
STATE AUDITOR



**Washington State Auditor
Brian Sonntag**

September 28, 2009

Board of Directors
Whatcom Transportation Authority
Bellingham, Washington

Report on Accountability

We appreciate the opportunity to work in cooperation with your Authority to promote accountability, integrity and openness in government. The State Auditor's Office takes seriously our role to advocate for government accountability and transparency and to promote positive change.

Please find attached our report on the Whatcom Transportation Authority's accountability and compliance with state laws and regulations and its own policies and procedures. Thank you for working with us to ensure the efficient and effective use of public resources.

Sincerely,

BRIAN SONNTAG, CGFM
STATE AUDITOR

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Whatcom County
September 4, 2009**

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Audit Summary

Whatcom Transportation Authority Whatcom County September 4, 2009

ABOUT THE AUDIT

This report contains the results of our independent accountability audit of the Whatcom Transportation Authority for January 1, 2008, through December 31, 2008.

We evaluated internal controls and performed audit procedures on the activities of the Authority. We also determined whether the Authority complied with state laws and regulations and its own policies and procedures.

In keeping with general auditing practices, we do not examine every transaction, activity or area. Instead, the areas examined were those representing the highest risk of noncompliance, misappropriation or misuse. The following areas were examined during this audit:

- Open public meetings laws
- Procurement (bidding/prevaling wage)
- Disbursements
- Conflict of interest laws
- Cash receipting

RESULTS

In the areas we examined, the Authority's internal controls were adequate to safeguard public assets. The Authority also complied with state laws and regulations and its own policies and procedures in the areas we examined.

Related Reports

**Whatcom Transportation Authority
Whatcom County
September 4, 2009**

FINANCIAL

Our opinion on the Authority's financial statements and compliance with federal grant program requirements is provided in a separate report, which includes the Authority's financial statements.

FEDERAL GRANT PROGRAMS

We evaluated internal controls and tested compliance with the federal program requirements, as applicable, for the Authority's major federal program, which is listed in the Federal Summary section of the financial statement and single audit report.

Description of the Authority

Whatcom Transportation Authority Whatcom County September 4, 2009

ABOUT THE AUTHORITY

The Whatcom Transportation Authority, created in 1983, serves approximately 190,000 Whatcom county residents. The Authority provides fixed route and vanpool services, as well as transportation services for the elderly and disabled.

The Authority is governed by a nine-member Board of Directors comprised of elected officials from Whatcom County jurisdictions that benefit from the Authority. The primary source of revenue comes from local sales taxes with a 2008 operating budget of approximately \$25.9 million. The Authority has approximately 240 employees.

ELECTED OFFICIALS

These officials served during the audit period:

Board of Directors:

Dan Pike, Mayor of Bellingham
Jack Louws, Mayor of Lynden
Jim Ackerman, Mayor of Nooksack
Pete Kremen, Whatcom County Executive
Seth Fleetwood, Whatcom County Council
Stan Snapp, Bellingham City Council
Barbara Ryan, Bellingham City Council
Mel Hansen, Ferndale City Council
Harry Robinson, Blaine City Council

APPOINTED OFFICIALS

General Manager

Richard Walsh

AUTHORITY CONTACT INFORMATION

Address: Whatcom Transportation Authority
 4111 Bakerview Spur Road
 Bellingham, WA 98226

Phone: (360) 676-7433

Web site: www.ridewta.com

AUDIT HISTORY

The Authority is audited on an annual basis. Authority management has been receptive to audit recommendations. This audit marks the 13th consecutive year without a finding.



ABOUT THE STATE AUDITOR'S OFFICE

The State Auditor's Office is established in the state's Constitution and is part of the executive branch of state government. The State Auditor is elected by the citizens of Washington and serves four-year terms.

Our mission is to work in cooperation with our audit clients and citizens as an advocate for government accountability. As an elected agency, the State Auditor's Office has the independence necessary to objectively perform audits and investigations. Our audits are designed to comply with professional standards as well as to satisfy the requirements of federal, state, and local laws.

The State Auditor's Office employees are located around the state to deliver our services effectively and efficiently.

Our audits look at financial information and compliance with state, federal and local laws on the part of all local governments, including schools, and all state agencies, including institutions of higher education. In addition, we conduct performance audits of state agencies and local governments and fraud, whistleblower and citizen hotline investigations.

The results of our work are widely distributed through a variety of reports, which are available on our Web site and through our free, electronic subscription service. We continue to refine our reporting efforts to ensure the results of our audits are useful and understandable.

We take our role as partners in accountability seriously. We provide training and technical assistance to governments and have an extensive quality assurance program.

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